

ELEVEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A TEQUILA BIRD

i

in an air of melodrama,
his face beaded in sweat,
he pursed his thin, viper-like
lips to say
"i quit," mocking us in
nationwide living color.
i turned the set off and
it grew dark outside,
the sun hidden in the wingspan
of the tequila bird.

ii

my eyes turned on them,
as they left escorted
by a fat policeman.
the stainless steel bracelets
bit tightly into their wrists,
and as the doors of the
dept. store closed behind them,
and the fat policeman opened
the back door of the car
for them to get in,
he was startled as a
tequila bird flew out at him
and disappeared up into
the sky.

iii

hitch-hiking,
the two young girls
heard its cry,
and looking above,
they saw,
on top of the telephone pole,
the tequila bird
grinning at them.
they took a bus.

iv

everyone sat in silence,
and when i was done reading,
they tucked napkins
under their chins, and
pulled out their forks and knives.
oh, where is the tequila bird now?

v

in the backseat of a mustang,
she told me she was taking
self-defense at cerritos j.c.,
and that she could break my fingers,
my wrists, pull my ears off,
poke my eyes out, dislocate my shoulder,
and even pull the hair out of my armpits.
the tequila bird perched on my
shoulder went into hysterics,
and i decided to watch the movie.

vi

in the heat of the afternoon,
the tequila bird practiced
transcendental meditation in
the shadows of the tree outside my window.
(he can't fool me, he's really asleep.)

vii

the tequila bird likes to eat
taquitos, frijoles, and
guacamole sauce.
except when he has a date afterwards.

viii

as my dad yelled at me
for parking my car in the driveway
which resulted in a pool
of oil to stain the concrete,
i lost track of what he was saying
as i noticed a feather belonging to the
tequila bird, saturated in the middle
of the black gloss.

ix

on saturday nights
the tequila bird likes to go out
and get drunk with his friends.
beware the wrath of mrs. tequila bird!

x

see the tequila bird
praying?
he is very humble.
(come xmas and easter he's a dove.)

there is an old saying that says,
"if one gets lost, he should look to the sky
and search for the tequila bird,
for if he is seen, then one is not lost,
but rather, he is home."

3/6/77: THE "AFRICAN QUEEN" REVISITED

a favorite fantasy is me and whoever
i happen to be in love with at the moment
stuck in the everglades of an african swamp.
our small boat, the "african queen," is tangled
in the reeds and just won't budge.
finally, i strip down to the waist and jump
overboard into the 4 ft. deep water. she stays on
board, as i pull the boat through the reeds
with a rope, and she directs me, pointing
out the way.

when i climb on board for a much-needed rest,
we find that leeches have attached themselves
to my bare back, and she quickly rubs salt
on the bloodsuckers, and she gives me medicine
to soothe the rope burns on my hands.
she is also crying, because she knows the
only reason i endure is for her.
after i have rested, i kiss her, and she holds me,
letting me know that she will love me
always. then i jump back to the
awaiting leeches, the dark water.

but what do you expect from someone who
(when he was 5 yrs. old), was seated
on the couch by his mother and told by her
that there was no santa claus
and that daddy was broke
and not to expect much for xmas.

i've been pretending ever since.

1/7/77: FOR THE FATHER OF MY FATHERS

when you see the gods
coming up the steps of the temple
to be received by you,
do not be foolish.
look not at their shiny, metal armor,
the four-legged creatures that they seem